The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news comments and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor occurring in the industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and contains other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Support The MIGHTY WAR LOAN

WHOLE NO. 1785 WILLIAM GREEN, President WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, JUNE 26, 1945 GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer VOL. 35, NO. 26

WORKERS AT WAR

Washington, D. C.—In this column are gathered outstanding news items regarding the activities of A.F.L. workers now serving with the armed forces, as reported officially by the War and Navy Departments:

Six A.F.L. men are among the group of 30 army officers and enlisted men brought back from the front lines on Okinawa to give the American public an eye-witness account of the fighting on that battle-scarred island, and throughout the Pacific.

The men, flown from an Okinawa airfield to San Francisco by Douglas C-54 transports in 55 flying hours, were selected from seasoned infantry divisions that have fought the Japs from the Aleutians campaign in the Aleutians through landings on Guam, Saipan, Leyte and, finally, Okinawa.

The A.F.L. men returned in the group include:

Sgt. Daniel J. Lydon, 37-year-old rifle platoon commander from St. Louis, and a member of Retail Clerks Association. The lieutenant, who fought with the 7th Division in the Aleutians, the Marshalls, the Philippines and on Okinawa, won the Bronze Star for heroic action on Kwajalein in the Marshalls. He wears, in addition, the Combat Infantryman badge, Pacific theater ribbon with four battle stars and a tattered American flag, signifying beachhead landings and the Philippines Liberation ribbon with two battle stars.

"The Jap has a firm belief that even if they continually lose battles," Lydon said, "Japan will still come out of this war victorious. Civilians, in fact, are out on the fact that the Jap soldier, though tough and well trained, is inbred with the Jap fanaticism of the invincibility of the Emperor and all he stands for.

Staff Sergt. Harry Peterson, 25, member of the International Association of Machinists from Wisconsin, went overseas in July, 1944, fought in the Philippines and made the D-Day landing on Okinawa with the 96th Division. The Japs, he said, fight to die, believing that death in battle will make them immortal. Peterson, whose wife, Lillian, and two children live in Cumberland, Wis., holds the Purple Heart for a wound on Leyte.

Staff Sergt. Charles C. Carston, another veteran of the 96th Division fighting in the Philippines and on Okinawa, was employed at St. Paul, Minn., and is a member of the Hod Carriers, Building and General Laborers' Union. Communications sergeant, Carston, who is 35, was hit by shrapnel in the face on D-Day in Okinawa but came back in the fighting a week later. The Japs, he learned, are experts on camouflage and excel on night infiltration. He awoke in his foxhole one morning at 4 a.m. on Okinawa to hear a Jap sniper only a few yards away. A hand grenade sent that Jap to his illustrious ancestors just in the nick of time, Carston explained.

A combat medical man in the Aleutians, Marshalls, Philippines, and on Okinawa, Staff Sergt. Seward Chesbro, 31, member of Retail Clerks, smashed that getting wounded men to Aid Stations in a hurry is of vital importance, in the Pacific. "Japs will bayonet any wounded men they find," he explained. "We had to get them out fast." Chesbro, who is a Purple Heart veteran, praised the meritorious conduct of his unit in operations on Attu, is a member of Local No. 4781, International Union of Electrical Workers.

Private First Class William Wullenschneider, 28-year-old combat engineer with the veteran 7th Infantry Division, is a member of the International Typographical Union, a former employee of the Belleville (Ill.) News-Democrat, Belleville, Kan. Since going overseas 27 months ago, he has participated in the campaigns on Attu and Kiska in the Aleutians, at Kwajalein in the Marshalls and on Okinawa. He won the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster for two wounds in combat, and Asiatic-Pacific ribbon with three battle stars. The Jap soldier has very little ingenuity, in this GI's opinion, but he will stick to the last which is given him. He is tough and he weighed down with equipment he'll give up.

Cpl. Walter Benson, 30, AFL Carpenter, Chicago, after 26 months of fighting at Attu, Kwajalein, Leyte and Okinawa, for which his Asiatic-Pacific ribbon bears the arrowhead and four bronze stars, said: "The fighting at Okinawa was the fiercest of the Japs because they had to defend it. They were all good fighters, well dug in, and they kept us in line from the first."

Union men in the navy are doing an outstanding job of using their skills to the utmost, acquiring new ones where needed, finding as they work, speeding the navy's job of battling time and distance—as well as the Japs—in the vast Pacific.

One of the fastest hammering jobs on record in this war was performed by a Seabee-carpenter, an AFL member, when he braved withering Jap sniper fire to nail down a signal tower atop a building on two Jima. The building had been captured by the Seabees after the predicated tower was hoisted to the roof. Given the job, Philip Hirsch, Chief Carpenter's Mate, USNR, of Minneapolis, and member of Local 7, AFL's UBC&J, had just started to hammer with an electric hammer when the Japs opened fire.

"The fellows down below hit the dirt," Hirsch recalls, "but we were stranded on top. It was let go of the tower or fall down to the ground. I chose to stay. I didn't we made swell targets. But we came through, and the tower still stands today despite the Japs."

Another Chief Carpenter's Mate, also an AFL member, faced deadly enemy mortar and artillery fire to remove mines and booby traps during the battle of Peleliu when these killer-minutes were impeding the construction of a vitally-needed airstrip. Although not primarily trained in bomb and mine disposal, Salvatore H. Impellitteri, of Newport, R. I., formerly a member of AFL's UBC&J Local 176, handled the job so skillfully and with such disregard for his personal safety that it won for him the Navy Silver Star Medal.

When a 300-pound box of destroyer turbine parts was lost overboard at a Western Pacific naval base, Seaman First Class Irving Weisfeld of Bellevue, Ky., called upon to bring up the vital parts. One of the divers was R. D. Staben, Boatswain's Mate, First Class, formerly a slab foreman at the Oregon Shipyards, Inc., in Portland, Ore. A member of Carpenters Brotherhood Lumber, Local 72, Staben worked in 137 feet of water, surrounded by the scattered wreckage of war that littered the ocean bottom. A badly-needed naval destroyer was able to complete repairs after Staben located the invaluable box and brought it to the surface.

Waldman Hits "World Labor" Group As Disruptive Communist Front

Tamiment, Pa.—Louis Waldman, New York labor lawyer and author, told the final session of the Jamp Tamiment Institute Labor Education Conference, of which he is permanent chairman, that "the great task of labor and liberal forces who take seriously the principles of democracy in the United States is to unite against the Communist menace."

Mr. Waldman also stressed the need for "unity among all truly progressive forces in America and Europe which have a common democratic objective, as opposed to any united front with communists." He declared:

"We need unity, not with the totalitarians, but against them."

The labor lawyer assailed the World Federation of Trade Unions as "an international Political Action Committee." He stated that the new federation has the avowed purpose of destroying the old democratic International from a dreadful battlefield.

"The WFTU will serve as another channel through which the Soviet trade unions will exercise influence upon the trade unions in the democratic countries which will be used as a lever to exert pressure to split them upon. Unity cannot be a one way street unless there is reciprocity, mutual cooperation and compromise.

"The WFTU is not a step toward labor unity. It deepens the cleavage between the AFL and CIO, and without labor unity on the domestic scene there cannot be international unity."

Mr. Waldman characterized the Soviet trade unions as "agencies of the Soviet government" and predicted that leaders of British and American unions will "find their honeymoon with the communists suddenly ending in a divorce."

Ives Heads New York Labor School

Ithaca, N. Y.—The Cornell board Cornell's trustees added five new of trustees voted unanimously for the members to the previous board membership unanimously for the appointment of Irving M. Ives, the unsuccessful Republican majority leader of the As- The new group includes Edward sembly, as dean of the recently estab- Corsi, State Industrial Commissioner; lished State School of Industrial and Harold E. Wheeler, State Commissioner Labor Relations at the university of Commerce, and three representhere. tatives from labor.

The appointment, announced by Dr. Thomas A. Murray of New York City, Edmund E. Day, Cornell's president, president of the New York State Federation on salary, and friends of Mr. Ives instituted that he would continue also of New York City, president of to serve in the Legislature at least the New York State Industrial Union through the 1946 session. Council, CIO, and Peter S. Colombo

In addition to the teaching of tech- of Buffalo, chairman of the New York nique and the training of leaders, the State Labor Relations Board, Northwood objective of the school are to promote Locomotive Firemen and Enginea mutual understanding between labor men. and industry of each other's problems and a more harmonious approach to Expansion of the Board, designed, in part, to provide representation for their solution. labor, was written into legislation that

Preceding Mr. Ives' appointment, was enacted this year.

AFL Fights "Straitjacket" Bill Seeking Compulsory Arbitration

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green denounced the new "labor relations" bill introduced in Congress by Senators Hatch, Ball and Burton as a legislative "straitjacket" for the nation's workers.

The measure would require compulsory arbitration of certain disputes, permit court injunctions against unions, curtail the closed shop and put organized labor under the thumb of government regimentation.

Senator Wayne L. Morse, of Oregon, in an impartial appraisal of the bill, declared it was "slanted" according to the employers' point of view. Reactionary newspapers and columnists hailed the proposed legislation but labor and liberal leaders united in condemning it. Mr. Green said the AFL would fight it with all its strength. The text of Mr. Green's statement follows:

"Three Senators, without practical experience in the field of labor relations, have hit upon a design for the future, tailored a straitjacket for labor and are now seeking to compel the nation's workers by law to wear their creation.

"In introducing their new labor relations bill, Senator Hatch, Ball and Burton declared that it has been 18 months in preparation. Yet in all that time labor was never even consulted about the provisions and, in fact, never saw a copy of the measure before it was introduced.

"These circumstances indicate an anti-labor attitude and hostility on the part of the bill's sponsors toward the workers of America. Surely, anyone who has had a practical and really new legislative proposal should be given an opportunity to present their viewpoint, if the sponsors were acting fairly, impartially and in good faith.

"Preliminary analysis of the Hatch-Ball-Burton bill discloses basically objectionable features. Among these are:

"1—The bill proposes compulsory arbitration. This is a restriction upon their freedom that the wage earners of America will never accept. Organized labor has fought compulsory arbitration since its earliest days as the only way to industrial serfdom. We will not give up that fight now.

"2—Under the guise of revising the National Labor Relations Act, the bill would so thoroughly transform that law as to make it an instrument of labor oppression, rather than emancipation.

"3—The right of contract is seriously impaired by the bill, which would prohibit labor and management from entering into voluntary closed shop agreements except on an unworkable percentage basis.

"4—The scope of the Wagner Act also would be seriously limited by the new bill, which proposes to exempt small employers from obligations required of larger enterprises.

"5—In sum, this measure seeks to establish government regimentation of labor and industry in general times to a degree that would gravely undermine free collective bargaining.

"The AFL and all others who have served their country so faithfully and so effectively during the war will resist this attempt to infringe upon their fundamental freedoms as their reward for victory won. In behalf, the American Federation of Labor will oppose the Hatch-Ball-Burton bill with all its strength."

Office Employes Union Triumphant In Three Important Elections

Washington, D. C.—Three smashing election victories have given sharp impetus to the nation-wide organizing drive of the Office Employes International Union, Paul R. Hutchings, president of the youngest AFL affiliate, announced.

In Providence, R. I., the union scored by better than two to one in an NLRB election among office employes at the huge plant of Brown & Sharp Mfg. Co. The vote was 711 for the AFL union to 328 against.

Again, at Quonsett, R. I., the union met an election test among office workers of the Geer-Du Puller Co. and the Merrill-Stevens Dry Dock & Repair Co., joint contractors for a Navy base, by winning 512 to 93.

The third election, and perhaps the most bitterly contested one, took place among the office employes of the Remington-Rand typewriter plant adding machine plant at Elmire, N. Y. Despite company efforts to placate the workers with wage adjustments just before the election, the union won 1,000 to 1,000.

Mr. Hutchings said these victories have inspired the union to intensify its organizing drive with a new expanded staff. For the present, the union will concentrate on firms with large numbers of office workers but it will not neglect any small groups which show a desire to join.

ARMY SEES TOUGH JOB FOR TRANSPORT WORKERS

Washington, D. C.—The War Department emphasized that a tough job is ahead for transport workers—members of railroad unions, and of teamsters, longshoremen's and other transportation unions—in the movement of army men and supplies to strike in full force on the Japs.

The number of army men crisscrossing the U. S. in Pullmans, coaches, hospital cars and troop sleepers is expected to reach a monthly peak of one and a half million monthly passengers by December.

The army estimates that the peak freight movement by rail, highways, and inland waterways will be reached in April of next year when a total of more than 11,000,000 tons are to be hauled by these carriers. The peak movement for freight is expected to occur some four to five months later.

AFL Fights Discrimination

Washington, D. C.—AFL President William Green called upon all affiliated unions and all AFL members to fight against racial and religious bigotry and discrimination.

In an article in the July issue of the American Federationist, Mr. Green declared it imperative that the mandate of the last convention for the establishment of "industrial equality" be carried out. He added:

"We must not falter or fail. We must fight to maintain and preserve American principles and the American way of life. The faces of all working men and women must be turned everlastingly against racial and religious discrimination and in favor of freedom, liberty, equality and democracy."

Emphasizing the importance of organized labor's stake in the elimination of intolerance, Mr. Green declared:

"Where the right of organized labor protects membership in any union upon race, religion or necessity, it is helping to create a potential antilabor army that can be used by labor-baiters to fight labor unions, weaken labor's collective bargaining position and destroy its effectiveness."

Another danger from discrimination was cited by Mr. Green. He said:

"Freedom is essential to the preservation of democracy. When we begin to limit it by insisting that it be denied to some because of racial or religious intolerance, the list of exceptions grows until finally freedom for all is ended.

"For instance, the rights of the worker, his freedom to organize into a union of his own choosing and to bargain collectively for wages and decent conditions of living, are the first to be destroyed if we seek to establish limited freedom."

THE AFL PRESENTS . . .

'BUILDERS OF VICTORY'

The Dramatic Story of Labor's Own Seabees

OVER CBS—EVERY SATURDAY—3:45 P.M., E.W.T.

News Briefs

EISENHOWER WELCOMED BY UNION, WITH BONDS

New York City.—Dressmakers' Union, Local 22, an affiliate of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, purchased $50,000 worth of bonds in the Seventh War Loan as contribution to the city's welcome to General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower. This purchase was made from funds in the local union treasury and is in addition to subscriptions of members of Local 22 in the current war loan drive, which already total $2,500,000, Charles S. Zimmerman, manager of the local, said.

ORNBURN TO BROADCAST OVER CBS ON JUNE 30

Washington, D. C.—"Union Label and Free Trade" will be the subject of a radio address by I. M. Ornburn, Secretary-Treasurer, Union Label Trades Department, American Federation of Labor, over the coast-to-coast network of the Columbia Broadcasting System June 30, from 9:30 to 9:45 p.m., EWT.

The Union Label Trades Department urges labor union officials to ask the Columbia station in their home communities to carry the broadcast which originates in Washington.

AFL WORKERS MAKE IMPROVED ARMY BOXES

Washington, D. C.—Water-tight, heat and bug-resisting boxes of sinitized plywood, made by members of AFL Carpenters' Union, AFL, at U. S. Plywood Company's New Rochsank, N. Y., plant are the Quartermaster Corps' newest development to protect goods going to the Pacific theater.

The old V-board (pulpboard) carton was of no use after it was opened. The new veneer box can be used again, once the nails are withdrawn. Made primarily of pine, it stands up well despite frequent handling necessary in long-distance shipping.

PEACE CHARTER RALLIES TO BE HELD ON JULY 4

Washington, D. C.—Forty-two national organizations, including the AFL, joined in a request to their members and units throughout the country to dedicate participation in Fourth of July celebrations to discussion of the San Francisco Charter, according to an announcement made by American United for World Organization, Inc.

This organization, headed by Ernest M. Hopkins, president of Dartmouth College, declared that the United States be the first nation to ratify the charter, thereby reasserting its moral leadership of the United States for international cooperation.

TOBACCO WORKERS WIN BACK PAY DIVIDEND

Winston-Salem, N. C.—In compliance with a War Labor Board order, a Williamson Tobacco Corp. has remitted a total of $50,000 in back pay to members of the AFL Tobacco Workers Union, Locals 178 and 179, it was announced. Individual payments ran as high as $115.

Employes of the Petersburg, Va., plant of the same company, will also benefit from the same order and receive retroactive pay of about $220,000.

The payments represented a graduated wage increase in the local cases and a flat 8 cent hourly increase in the Virginia plant.

DUBINSKY REPORTS ON UNION FINANCES

New York City.—David Dubinsky, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, made public a statement of receipts and disbursements for 1944 showing the income of 605 local unions totaled to $8,741,731.39, of which the national office received $1,609,703.65. The statement covered also the 24 joint boards and 14 departments and regional offices.

Total actual disbursements were $6,717,131.72, making a total excess of receipts over disbursements of $24,599.67.

Mr. Dubinsky said that the union spent during 1944 $855,163 for war relief, donations to charitable and labor organizations and gifts to various men, exclusive of a sum totaling $750,000 raised by its locals for war relief purposes.

FLINT GLASS-WORKERS GAIN BETTER CONDITIONS

Atlantic City.—Speedy progress was achieved at the 67th annual wage conference here of the American Flint Glass Workers' Union and the National Association of Manufacturers of Pressed and Blown Glassware.

Harry F. Lamb, union president, announced that the first meeting resulted in an agreement under which automatic machine operators will receive night shift differentials of four and six cents an hour, plus improved vacation allowances. In addition, this union won reaffirmation of the checkoff on a national basis.

Negotiations relating to other departments and skilled crafts in the trade will follow.

Metal Trades Win Wage Differential On Ship Repair In Los Angeles Area

WLB Grants 11.6 Percent Bonus After Congress Joins AFL In Fight

Washington, D. C.—AFL Metal Trades unions won a resounding victory when the National War Labor Board relented under pressure and granted an 11.6 percent wage differential for ship repair work in the southern California yards.

Failure to pay this premium rate for the dangerous, nasty and arduous ship repair jobs, despite the fact that all other shipyards on the West Coast had traditionally allowed the differential, had caused a shortage of labor on reconditioning of navy vessels damaged in the Pacific war.

AFL Metal Trades Senators and Representatives from West Coast states had joined the Metal Trades Department of the AFL in urging the War Labor Board to grant the union demands.

The differential conforms with the rates paid in the northern Pacific yards, which the southern area employers have sought for several years. Extension of the differential was retroactive last year and again a month ago.

In announcing the action of the WLB, Chairman George W. Taylor said:

"The dominating consideration of the WLB in making this decision was the urgent necessity of seeing that ships are repaired and returned to the war in the Pacific with the maximum of speed and efficiency.

"The payment of some added wages for ship repair work is customary throughout the industry, although the amount varies. The premium rate in the wage provided in this case was set to conform with that paid in the northern Pacific area. In reaching its decision all members of the board sought to achieve the best solution of the very complex problem presented and agreed unanimously on the action taken.

"In balancing conflicting claims, the board evolved a solution which preserves the equity of all parties, grants the unions a basis for appeal for getting on with the current problem—winning the war in the Pacific."

The navy recently announced a need for several thousand skilled ship repair mechanics in California and said workers were leaving the yards at an alarming rate. The yards involved are Bethlehem Steel Corporation, Shipbuilding Division, San Pedro; Todd Shipyards, San Pedro; Consolidated Steel Corporation, Maywood, Calif., and 11 smaller companies.

At a public hearing before the WLB made its decision, Senator Wayne L. Morse (Rep., Ore.) appeared personally as spokesman for all the West Coast Senators and Congressman Richard J. Welch (Rep., Calif.) on behalf of all Congressmen from the three coast states.

Both pointed out that the wage discrimination has existed largely because the Navy Department, which has clamored loudest about a manpower shortage in the yards, has supported the shipyard owners in their refusal to "correct the injustice".

"This short-sighted policy," said Welch, "has created unrest and dissatisfaction, with resultant loss of manpower, than all other factors combined."

In equally strong terms, Senator Morse declared that the responsibility for having taken the position that it would "injure the war effort" to require southern California yards to pay the same wages on repair work as are paid on the rest of the coast.

"The fact is, failure to correct the discrimination has interfered with the war effort because it has resulted in tremendous unrest on the coast," Morse declared.

Labor's case was presented by President John P. Frey of the AFL Metal Trades Department. He submitted a comprehensive study of official documents substantiating his claim that a coast-wise agreement negotiated several years ago, establishing a uniform wage rate on ship repair jobs, applied equally to every yard on the Pacific seaboard.

Wage Hike For Gov't Employes

Washington, D. C.—Federal Government employes, many of whom are organized into AFL unions, were looking forward to their first increase in basic pay in 28 years as Senate conferees took the final step toward enactment of the new government pay bill.

The House of Representatives adopted a conference report on the bill by a voice vote and the Senate is expected to follow suit with little, if any, opposition.

More than 1,400,000 classified government employes are affected by the legislation, which is designed to help them offset increased living costs.

The bill, for the first time, grants government employes time-and-a-half for overtime over 40 hours a week.

It also increases wage rates an average of 15 percent on a graduated basis which will provide higher percentage rates for those in the lower income brackets and less than 15 percent for those earning over $3,000 a year.

Another bill, affecting postal employes, is scheduled for enactment before the end of the fiscal year. This measure also would increase pay rates and provide time-and-a-half for overtime. No serious opposition is expected.

The fight for enactment of these measures was led by the newly formed Government Employes Council of the American Federation of Labor.

Wider Activity For ILO Receives Truman's Support, Miss Perkins Says

Quebec, Can.—Secretary of Labor Frances D. Perkins, on behalf of President Harry S. Truman, gave assurance of the continuance of United States support of the International Labor Organization at the opening session of the meeting of the ILO's governing body here.

"President Truman has asked me to say to you," Miss Perkins said, "that the government of the United States will continue to take full part in the work of the ILO and will continue to look to it for information, guidance and leadership on the international plane in the improvement of labor standards and the development of measures to combat poverty everywhere."

"The President also hopes that the ILO will be able to pursue its activities in cooperative relationship with the proposed general organization of the United Nations under arrangements providing sufficient autonomy to permit of its putting forth its greatest effort. It is the settled policy of the United States Government to seek for the ILO a proper place within the framework of the coordinated effort of the United Nations."

Later in her speech, Miss Perkins said with the ILO's aim to achieve a full world employment program by the close association of representatives of employers and employes, Miss Perkins declared that the United States was "committed to the idea that full employment is to be achieved with a minimum interference with and with complete liberty of choice."

Carter Goodrich, chairman of the ILO's two-member Governing Body this year, also stressed the necessity for full association of the ILO with the new organizations now being formed.

Watch For New AFL Radio Program "American Federationist of the Air"

Washington, D. C.—At last labor will have its own news program on the air!

Beginning July 7 and continuing each Saturday at 6:45 P.M., EWT, for the rest of the year, the American Federation of Labor will present over the Blue Network of the American Broadcasting Company "The American Federationist of the Air," a weekly news magazine. The program will be listed in all the radio columns of the newspaper as "Labor-USA."

Each program will feature special reports by AFL staff experts on matters of outstanding interest to labor, as well as covering news highlights. In addition, the AFL plans to present a "guest column" by a high-ranking personality in the nation's life each week. The programs will be conducted by Phil Fearl, commentator for the AFL.

If you are interested in the news of labor and its views on all important national and international matters, make certain to listen to these programs—regularly!